



North Dakota Heritage Center Expansion Fast Facts

State Historical Society of North Dakota and its Foundation

The Beginning

The North Dakota Heritage Center, which began as a 1976 U.S. Bicentennial project for the state, opened its doors in 1981. The original gallery, collection storage, labs, and offices were designed for a 20-year plan; the Heritage Center was designed to be expanded. Expansion planning began in 2002 with Governor Hoeven's State Historical Society of North Dakota Commission, under the guidance of all five former living governors. Since 2001, \$21 million has been invested across the state in heritage tourism infrastructure; the last remaining piece is the expansion of the North Dakota Heritage Center. Phase I, the expansion of the state archives, began in 2005; the grand opening was held in 2007. This 25-year plan added 30,000 square feet (s.f.) of collections storage at a cost of \$5.7 million, doubling archives collections space.

Phase II Expansion

The second phase of expansion will double the existing exhibit, visitor services, programming, collections storage, labs, and office space by adding 97,000 s.f. Half of the expansion, 48,000 s.f., will provide more public space and exhibit galleries, and half will be on the lower level for daily agency operations. The size of this expansion was determined by a 25-year need for collections growth. The 2005 and 2007 Legislative Assembly allocated planning dollars, and the 2009 Assembly authorized \$40 million towards this \$52 million project. The remaining \$12 million is being raised by the State Historical Society of North Dakota Foundation from private and federal sources, corporations and foundations, and other groups.

Sustainability is at the core of the construction and ongoing operations of the expanded Heritage Center. Using geothermal and fly ash technologies, energy efficient systems, recycling programs, the North Dakota Heritage Center is going green.

Collections

The State Historical Society has several different collection responsibilities. Along with the State Archives, which collects and preserves books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, and moving film, there are the archaeology and historic preservation collections, and artifact collections. Through an agreement with the Department of Mineral Resources, North Dakota Geological Survey, the Center also houses the Johnsrud Paleontology Laboratory.

Archaeology and Historic Preservation Collections include millions of specimens representing human activity that were recovered across the state. There are also thousands of resource files critical to oil, coal, wind, road, and bridge contractors and developers across the state. The Heritage Center is also the federal archaeology repository for the state. Also considered collections, a statewide network of 55 state historic sites is administered from the Heritage Center. Ten of these sites have interpretive centers or museums.

Artifact Collections are three-dimensional objects, including items such as natural history specimens, textiles, vehicles, agricultural equipment, art, toys, weapons and furniture. Objects range in age from a 10,000-year-old mastodon skeleton to disposable items used yesterday, and in scale from tiny glass beads to a locomotive.

Paleontology Collections represent the fossil history and the geology of North Dakota. Specimens in the paleontology lab include a gem and mineral collection, and the State Fossil Collection consisting of fossils ranging in scale from microscopic pollen to huge dinosaur skeletons. The Heritage Center is also the federal paleontology repository for the state.

Public Level and Exhibit Galleries

The building areas are named to reference elements of land, air, and water and correspond to the geography of the state from east to west. The Pembina River Plaza, Northern Lights Atrium, Great Plains Theater, Red, Sheyenne and Souris River Halls, James River Café, Missouri River Event Center, and the Badlands Plaza. Several improvements will be made to the Russell Reid Auditorium, and the Museum Store will expand. All these areas focus on enhancing the visitor's experience.

The Heritage Center currently has about 28,000 s.f. of exhibition space; because of limited space it is missing the last seven decades of North Dakota history in the Main Gallery. Additional exhibit areas in the Corridor of History and adjacent halls have been identified for additional exhibition opportunities, providing over 47,000 s.f. of exhibit space. New galleries include:

The Geological Time Gallery contains over 500 million years of North Dakota history illustrating the earliest life forms up to the last glaciation, about 10,000 years ago. These exhibits, which include the dinosaurs and much more, set the stage for the fossil fuel stories of North Dakota's oil and coal industries and explain the landscape and soils that have shaped the state's agricultural future.

The Early Peoples Gallery covers over 10,000 years of the earliest human history in what is now North Dakota. When the Giza pyramids in Egypt or pre-Columbian civilizations of South America flourished, so did American Indian civilizations in North Dakota. The gallery highlights early occupation and exploration up to the establishment of Dakota Territory in 1861.

The Inspiration, Opportunities and Innovation Gallery is the current Main Gallery, and will present the last 150 years of the state's history. It will investigate opportunities, innovations, decisions, and outcomes through captivating stories about North Dakota's resources, industries, events, and people.

The Governors Gallery will host temporary and traveling exhibits, creating regional and world-class blockbuster events. This gallery will provide an opportunity to bring the world to North Dakota and share the state with other museums across the country and world.

Hub of History

A tourist information center, this Hub of History will direct visitors to all corners of the state to experience the people, landscape, and history where it happened. The expanded Heritage Center is a destination, part of a *String of Pearls* of heritage tourism opportunities across the northern border. The opportunities will include all of the state's cultural, heritage, ecological, agricultural, sporting, and Main Street tourism venues. The Hub will be a statewide network of partnerships offering the best of the state to those who live near and those visiting from afar.

The Timeline

Construction will take about two years, from July 2010 to Fall 2012. The exhibit galleries will open over the following two-year period from Fall 2012 into 2014, culminating in North Dakota's 125th anniversary of statehood on November 2, 2014. The expansion of the North Dakota Heritage Center is a gift to the people of North Dakota as they celebrate their 125th anniversary of statehood.

